

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 118026

EXDIS FOR TONY LAKE, VP'S PARTY

FOLLOWING REPEAT LONDON 08086 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
LUSAKA DAR ES SALAAM MAPUTO GABORONE CAPE TOWN
DTD 16 MAY

QTE

S E C R E T LONDON 8086

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: RH, PFOR, UK

SUBJECT: CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING WITH SITHOLE

REF: STATE 110060

SUMMARY. UK CONSULTATIVE GROUP, WITH EMBOFF PRESENT,
MET WITH SITHOLE MAY 16. DISCUSSION CONSISTED MOSTLY OF
UK EXPLANATION OF PRESENT THINKING WITH WHICH
CONSULTATIVE GROUP STARTING ITS DISCUSSIONS ABOUT
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ELABORATING A CONSTITUTION FOR AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE
IN 1978, AND STEPS ALONG THE WAY TOWARD THAT GOAL. THE
MEETING WAS EXPLORATORY AND EXPLANATORY. SITHOLE MOSTLY
CONFINED HIMSELF TO GATHERING INFORMATION AND ASKING
QUESTIONS. HE WELCOMED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
CONSULTATIVE GROUP AND THE US ROLE IN IT (BUT NOT US
PARTICIPATION IN ANY LATER CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE).

UK REPRESENTATIVE GRAHAM, SOFT-SPOKEN AND UNDOGMATIC, EMPHASIZED THE UK'S OPEN-MINDEDNESS. SITHOLE WAS FRIENDLY, AND THE AMBIANCE AGREEABLE. SITHOLE SAID THE ZANU CENTRAL COMMITTEE WOULD BE MEETING SOON TO CONSIDER THE SITUATION, THAT ZANU WOULD PRESENT ITS VIEWS PARTLY IN WRITING, AND HE WOULD BE MEETING THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP SOON AGAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. SITHOLE AGREED TO EMBOFF PARTICIPATION IN HIS MAY 16 MEETING WITH GRAHAM.

2. PRIOR TO MEETING, GRAHAM AGREED NOT TO PRESENT WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE TO SITHOLE (REFTEL, PARA 3). HE SAID UK TOO HAD MISGIVINGS, BUT AVOIDING WRITTEN VIEWS PRESENTED A REAL PROBLEM SINCE A CONSTITUTION WAS SUCH A COMPLICATED ISSUE. HE MENTIONED THAT TACTICS PAPER (TRANSMITTED LONDON 7463) REPRESENTED ONLY TENTATIVE UK THINKING. HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT POSSIBLE TO TIE DOWN IN A TACTICS PAPER HOW TO CONDUCT THE CONSULTATIONS SINCE IT WAS NECESSARY TO SEE HOW THINGS WOULD DEVELOP.

3. SITHOLE WAS ACCOMPANIED AT MEETING, WHICH LASTED HOUR AND QUARTER, BY AUSTIN CHAKAODZA, ZANU (SITHOLE) REP IN LONDON. GRAHAM WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CONSULTATIVE GROUP TEAM (JOHN FLYNN OF RHODESIA DEPARTMENT AND HENRY STEELE, A LEGAL ADVISER CURRENTLY IN GENEVA WHO WILL JOIN GROUP IN AFRICA MAY 23) AND RHODESIA DEPARTMENT HEAD PATRICK LAVER. ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR FRIEDMAN ATTENDED FOR EMBASSY.

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4. EMBASSY TRANSMITTING BY SEPTTEL TALKING-POINTS PAPER WHICH SERVED AS BASIS FOR GRAHAM'S PRESENTATION. IT REFLECTS ACCURATELY TONE OF HIS PRESENTATION, THOUGH HE TALKED FREELY AND DID NOT ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW IT STRICTLY OR COVER ALL ITEMS, E.G., HE DID NOT DISCUSS SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MINORITY REPRESENTATION, METHOD OF ELECTION, OR THE ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND.

5. IN OPENING REMARKS, GRAHAM SAID THAT DR. OWEN HAD FOUND SUFFICIENT COMMON GROUND DURING HIS AFRICAN TRIP TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO TAKE THE SOUNDINGS FURTHER. THE EFFORT WOULD BE TO REACH A CONSENSUS AND DEVELOP A CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT BROADLY ACCEPTABLE AS A WHOLE, THOUGH NOT EVERYONE WOULD AGREE ON ALL DETAILS. HE COVERED MOST ITEMS IN FIRST TWO PAGES OF HIS TALKING-POINTS PAPER, INCLUDING FACT THAT UK WAS WORKING VERY CLOSELY WITH US. HE SAID IT WAS NOW DESIRABLE TO MEET AGAIN WITH THE INTERESTED PARTIES, EXPLAIN UK THINKING

AND OBTAIN IDEAS OF OTHERS. STRESSED THAT UK WAS OPEN-MINDED ON THE CONSTITUTION AND PROCEDURES LEADING TO IT, BUT HELD TO THREE BROAD PRINCIPLES: (A) A BROAD FRANCHISE - US AND UK THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE; (B) CONSTITUTION SHOULD HAVE A BILL OF RIGHTS TO SAFEGUARD BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS; (C) CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE JUSTICIABLE, WHICH MEANS INDEPENDENCE OF JUDICIARY.

6. SITHOLE SAID HE WAS KEEN TO FIND OUT WHAT THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP WAS ALL ABOUT AND HE WANTED AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. HE STRESSED THE NEED TO APPLY A LOT OF PRESSURE ON IAN SMITH. WHILE ZANU APPRECIATED THE JOINT PRESSURE FROM THE US AND THE UK, THEY WOULD NOT WANT THE US TO BE ONE OF THE DELEGATES AT A CONFERENCE BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO KEEP ZAMBIA FREE OF A SUPER-POWER STRUGGLE. THE US IS A FRIEND, BUT IF IT IS SECRET

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A DELEGATE, THEN THE SOVIETS AND OTHERS COULD CLAIM EQUAL STATUS. HE WELCOMED AS MUCH US INVOLVEMENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT "BEHIND THE SCENES." DURING THE CONSULTATIONS, HOWEVER, (AS OPPOSED TO A CONFERENCE), HE APPRECIATED THAT THEY WERE BEING JOINTLY UNDERTAKEN SINCE THAT DEMONSTRATED TO SMITH THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THEY WERE REGARDED.

7. GRAHAM "TOOK NOTE" OF SITHOLE'S POINT RE US PARTICIPATION. HE STRESSED HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS THAT THE US AND UK BE SEEN TO BE INVOLVED TOGETHER. FRIEDMAN AT THAT POINT TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE POINTS PARA 2 REFTL. SITHOLE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE PRESENT JOINT APPROACH SUCCEED FOR ZIMBABWE AND FOR THE BENEFICIAL EFFECT SUCCESS MIGHT HAVE ON THE NAMIBIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATIONS.

8. SITHOLE ASKED ABOUT THE TIMETABLE FOR THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE INDEPENDENCE PROCESS. GRAHAM ENVISAGED A WEEK OR TWO FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS DURING WHICH THE GROUP WOULD PUT ITS CARDS ON THE TABLE AND DEFINE THE SUBJECTS ON WHICH IT WOULD LIKE DETAILED VIEWS. THE FIRST ROUND WOULD BE EXPLORATORY AND EXPLANATORY. AFTER THAT, HE HOPED FOR MORE DETAILED TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH LEGAL ADVISERS WHICH COULD TAKE QUITE A TIME. AFTER DETAILS OF CONSTITUTION THAT SATISFY "90 PERCENT OF EVERYBODY" WERE IN HAND, THE DIFFICULT DETAILS OF THE INTERIM PERIOD WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED. THIS WHOLE PROCESS MIGHT TAKE SIX MONTHS -- "IF THEY WERE LUCKY." OWEN HAD IN MIND A BILL TO BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT IN NOVEMBER

OR DECEMBER. THIS ENABLING BILL WOULD TAKE ABOUT TWO MONTHS TO GET THROUGH PARLIAMENT. SMITH WOULD THEN WANT TO MAKE PARALLEL LEGISLATIVE ARRANGEMENTS IN RHODESIA. ABOUT MAY 1 MIGHT BE THE DATE FOR SMITH TO RESIGN AND THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT PROCESS TO START.

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INDEPENDENCE MIGHT FOLLOW FOUR TO SIX MONTHS AFTER SMITH'S RESIGNATION DAY, BUT THE PROCESS FROM THAT POINT ON WOULD BE INEXORABLE.

9. SITHOLE ASKED ABOUT THE UK ROLE IN AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. GRAHAM DESCRIBED THREE BASIC POSSIBILITIES RANGING FROM SOMETHING LIKE OLD-FASHIONED COLONIAL GOVERNMENT, THROUGH POWER-SHARING (BUT WITHOUT SMITH) AND A RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, TO DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO SOME INTERNATIONAL (E.G., COMMONWEALTH) AUTHORITY. A COMBINATION WAS POSSIBLE, AND THE UK WANTED THE VIEWS OF SITHOLE AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

10. CHAKAODZA ASKED WHAT PRESSURES WOULD BE EXERTED ON SMITH IF HE DIDN'T ACCEPT THE CONSTITUTION. GRAHAM ADMITTED FRANKLY THAT PLANS WERE NOT YET MADE, BUT HE STRESSED THE COMMITMENT OF THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION AND CITED THE ADVANTAGE TO THE NATIONALISTS OF GAINING POWER THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS (SPEEDIER, SPARING OF LIVES, INHERITING PROSPEROUS ECONOMY, AND BETTERING THE CHANCES OF A HARMONIOUS NON-RACIAL SOCIETY). SITHOLE POINTED TO THE HARM DONE THE NATIONALIST FIGHTERS BY RAISING EXPECTATIONS OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION THAT MIGHT NOT COME TO PASS. GRAHAM ADMITTED THE VALIDITY OF THE POINT, BUT SAID SMITH FACED A SIMILAR MORALE PROBLEM.

11. IN REPLY TO CHAKAODZA'S REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION ABOUT INTENTIONS TO ESTABLISH THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP SOMEWHERE IN AFRICA, GRAHAM SAID HE DID NOT ENVISAGE BEING ANYWHERE MORE THAN TWO OR THREE DAYS AT A TIME, EXCEPT PERHAPS FOUR OR FIVE DAYS IN SALISBURY. BUT HE WAS NOT ENVISAGING A PERMANENT BASE. IF THE WORK PROGRESSED AND LOOKED PROMISING, A TIME WOULD COME WHEN IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO SET UP AN OFFICE IN SALISBURY.

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12. IN REPLY TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT SENDING TROOPS,

GRAHAM MADE CLEAR THIS WAS SIMPLY NOT IN THE CARDS FOR EITHER THE UK OR THE US. GRAHAM ASKED WHAT SITHOLE THOUGHT ABOUT A COMMONWEALTH FORCE, OR OTHER COMBINATION BASED ON THE RHODESIAN POLICE OR ARMY OR THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS. SITHOLE RESPONDED THAT HE WAS NOT GIVING ANY ANSWERS AT THIS STAGE, BUT RATHER WAS ASKING QUESTIONS.

13. THE MEETING CLOSED WITH SITHOLE EXPRESSING THANKS FOR THE INFORMATION PROVIDED HIM. HE POINTED OUT THE OBVIOUS -- THAT THEY (ZANU) HADN'T EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS, BUT RATHER HAD TRIED TO FIND OUT WHAT THE UK HAD IN MIND. THEY WOULD NOW CONSIDER THE MATTER, HOLD A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING, AND GIVE GRAHAM THEIR THINKING. NO DOUBT IT WOULD BE PARTLY IN WRITING, WITH ORAL CLARIFICATION. ARRANGEMENTS WERE DISCUSSED ABOUT MEETING AGAIN, PERHAPS DURING THE WEEK OF MAY 29. SITHOLE SAID HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH GRAHAM. SPIERS UNQTE VANCE

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